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ANNEX A TO
CHAPTER 6 TO
COIN HANDBOOK

INTERROGATION OF PRISONERS IN COIN

INTRODUCTION

1. You may be aware of the repercussions which followed the successful but controversial deep interrogation of suspects in NI in 1971. A committee of Privy Councillors was appointed to consider authorised procedures for the interrogation of persons suspected of terrorism. This committee produced a majority and a minority report. You must be absolutely clear that the British Government accepted the minority report of Lord Gardiner and not the majority report by the rest of the Committee when, on 2 Mar 72, the then Prime Minister said in the House of Commons "The Government having reviewed the whole matter with great care and with particular reference to any future operations, have decided that the techniques which the Committee examined will not be used in future as an aid to interrogation". The techniques to which the Prime Minister referred were wall-standing, hooding, noise, deprivation of sleep and restricted diet. The Prime Minister also said "I must make it plain that interrogation in depth will continue but that these techniques will not be used. It is important that interrogation should continue. The statement that I have made covers all future circumstances. If a Government did decide, on whatever grounds I would not like to foresee, that additional techniques were required for interrogation, then I think that, on the advice which is given in both the majority and minority reports, and subject to any cases before the courts at the moment, they would probably have to come to the House and ask for the powers to do it". In addition to this statement, the Joint Intelligence Committee produced a "Directive on Interrogation by the Armed Forces in Internal Security Operations". (JIC(A) (72) 21 dated 19 Jun 72.) As you would expect this supports the government line. There is no requirement to go into the detail here, as it is a sensitive issue, but clearly interrogation in any future CRW/FP operation will need close direction in order to avoid political embarrassment.

PART ONE - RULES GUIDING INTERROGATION POLICY IN COIN

2. The rules guiding interrogation policy are, in brief:
- a. In COIN situations interrogation will be conducted by civil police and civilians and only in the most exceptional circumstances will the Services become involved. In such circumstances Ministerial approval is mandatory before any serviceman is committed.

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- b. The 5 techniques examined by the Parker Committee are absolutely forbidden (hooding, stress positions etc).
- c. All interrogations are to be conducted within the requirements of international and domestic law.
- d. Medical examinations are to be carried out both on entry and before exit on all persons subjected to interrogation.
- e. Thorough and detailed records are to be maintained at places of interrogation.

PART TWO - THE CONSEQUENCES OF INTERROGATION

3. Algeria is mentioned more than once in the COIN package; it provides us with many useful lessons. An outline of the campaign there is given in Annex B to Chapter 2 of this Handbook.

4. Here we examine the French use of torture and forceful interrogation and indicate the consequences for the conduct of operations, for those who participated and for the French cause.¹

5. There is no doubt that the French treatment of suspects was very tough, despite those concerned being clear that what they were doing was illegal. As Servan-Schreiber remarks:²

"The captains and the mayors lie to the generals and the prefects when a transgression is committed in my regiment by some of my men on an operation, do you think that I ever hear about it? No. It's covered up 'between pals'."

6. What were these transgressions?

CAUSES CELEBRES

7. Public opinion began to focus in on the subject when well-known names began to surface in mysterious or reprehensible circumstances. There was the ill-explained death of Ben M'Lidi. Later Henri Alleg gave a detailed account of the tortures that he had suffered. Electrodes were placed in his mouth and "my jaws were soldered to the electrode by the current, and it was impossible for me to unlock my teeth, no matter what effort I made. My eyes, under their spasmed (sic) lids, were crossed with images of fire, and geometric luminous patterns flashed in front

¹See "A Savage War of Peace": Alastair Horne

²See "Lieutenant en Algerie": Servan-Schreiber

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